The Struggle for Literary Publishing: Three Toronto Publishers Negotiate Separate Contracts for Canadian Authors 1920–1940

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It is rather strange that Mr. Carman, as a Canadian, has not had a Canadian edition of his work published, and he is keenly interested in having this done ... We, as Canadians, are also much interested in the matter and while it may not be a very profitable venture financially, we would like if possible if we could arrange with you to bring out a volume.

McClelland & Stewart (Toronto) to Small,
Maynard (Boston), 28 February 1921¹

I. Introduction: Publishing Strategies after the First World War

The arrangements for a Canadian edition of poet Bliss Carman's *Later Poems* (1921) between two publishers acting on their author's wishes

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¹ McClelland & Stewart to Small, Maynard, 28 February 1921, file 5, box 122, George L. Parker Papers (hereafter Parker Papers) within McClelland & Stewart Fonds (hereafter M&S Fonds), William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University Library. The Parker Papers contain correspondence and contracts between M&S and its authors that I transcribed in 1966–67, but the originals no longer exist. These materials are cited in my dissertation, "A History of a Canadian Publishing House: A Study of the Relation between Publishing and the Profession of Writing 1890–1940," Ph.D. diss, University of Toronto, 1969.

was part of a significant trend in the 1920s. For John McClelland (1877-1968), the president of McClelland & Stewart (M&S), it marked the acquisition of an internationally renowned Canadian poet. For Carman (1861-1929), this landmark edition – it had five printings by 1926 – revived his career, and coincided with his triumphant return to Canada after 25 years and his first exhausting cross-country tour.

In the decades leading up to 1920, English-language publishers in Canada had often arranged Canadian editions with foreign publishers by a licence for a set period of years. However, there was no licence this time. In that decade of postwar nationalism and new starts, separate contracts between Canadian publishers and their authors became the norm, an acknowledgement of the publishers' exclusive rights in their own market. This move paralleled other assertions of autonomy, such as Canada's 1921 copyright act, the embassy it established in Washington in 1926, and the Statute of Westminster in 1931 that recognized Canada as a self-governing dominion in the British Commonwealth. Although the proliferation of such contracts by a handful of Toronto publishers did not result in a separate market until the 1960s, from the 1920s onward the Canadian industry gradually reshaped its colonial identity as simply an importer of agency books.

This handful of publishers, who like middle-aged John McClelland started in the trade before the First World War and dreamed of being real publishers, included Thomas Allen (1872-1951) of Thomas Allen & Company; S.B. Gundy (1868-1936), manager of the Canadian branch of Oxford University Press; and Charles J. Musson (1869-1947) of The Musson Company. In the post-war generation were Hugh Eayrs (1894-1940), president of the subsidiary Macmillan Company of Canada; and Lorne Pierce (1890-1961), literary editor of The Ryerson Press. Also active for several years were Louis Carrier (1898-1961) of Montreal, and Henry Miller (1890-1942) of Ottawa's Graphic Publishers.² This paper centres on the particular efforts of Eayrs, McClelland, and Pierce to "repatriate" internationally established writers such as Carman, Charles Gordon (1860-1937; *pseud.* Ralph Connor), Stephen Leacock (1869-1944), and L.M. Montgomery (1874-1942). They also sought out and nurtured newcomers Irene Baird (1901-1981), Morley Callaghan (1903-1990), Mazo de la Roche

² For their collective help in providing information about Henry Miller, I would like to thank Jeannine Farazeli, Peter Greig, Janet Kirkconnell, and George Neville. For last minute help, thanks to John Shoesmith and Karen Smith.

(1879-1961), Frederick Philip Grove (1879-1948), Raymond Knister (1899-1932), E.J. Pratt (1882-1964), Martha Ostenso (1900-1963), and Laura Goodman Salverson (1890-1970). Although always gentlemanly, they were intensely competitive in attracting authors.

McClelland, Eayrs, and Pierce plied their trade in a book market that remained colonial long after Canada achieved dominion status in 1867. Because this cottage industry could not adequately serve its readers, most of the books that Canadians read came from the net exporting countries, Britain, France, and the United States, and most of these imports – or “agency” books – could not be economically published here. British and American firms typically held world rights, and either assigned the rights for Canadian editions under licence or distributed their books through local agents – be they printers, publishers, jobbers, or retailers. Even in cases where a Canadian author and her literary agent advocated for a separate Canadian contract, they could meet with resistance from British or American publishers. Marjorie Pickthall’s experiences during the First World War illustrate this situation. Her London literary agent Eric Pinker tried to arrange a separate Canadian edition for her novel *Little Hearts* (1915) with Methuen of London because he thought it “would be likely to have a larger sale than copies of the Methuen edition exported to Canada.” However, Methuen insisted on sending its Colonial edition to Canada, and years later Pinker told Pickthall’s father, “The terms for this Colonial edition, of course, are not very good but they are the terms usually paid by English publishers, [sic] When we arrange for separate Canadian editions we usually get a much better royalty than English publishers pay for the Colonial editions, but in this case it was not possible to do anything apart from Methuens as they had the right under their agreement dated Decembet [sic] 22nd 1914.”³ For her next novel, *The Bridge* (1922), Pickthall wrote McClelland on 6 May 1916, “I cannot sell the Canadian book rights apart from either the English or American ones, because no London or New York publisher would handle a novel of which the Canadian or Colonial rights were unavailable. But if you can place it in New York, it might be more profitable to me than placing it in England, with only the small royalty which they allow on the Colonial edition as a return

³ Eric Pinker to Arthur C. Pickthall, 7 November 1922, Correspondence series, Marjorie Lowry Christie Pickthall sous-fonds, Locator 2001.1-60-10, Lorne and Edith Pierce Collection, Queen’s University Archives. (In fact, S.B. Gundy published a Canadian edition of *Little Hearts* [1915], which probably competed with Methuen’s Colonial edition.)

from sales in this country.”⁴ Pickthall’s strategy was to employ a New York literary agent, Francis Arthur Jones, for her American market.

This entitlement American and British publishers exhibited toward the Canadian market continued well beyond the 1930s. Lovat Dickson, an expatriate Canadian publisher in London who supported Canadian attempts to develop a separate market, recounted his conversation with an American who wanted the Canadian rights for one of Dickson’s English books.

“Oh, we always have to have Canada,” he said. “It’s necessary, you see, for Book Club adoptions and for our system of marketing books to count Canadian territory as part of the U.S. The market’s not worth anything, but it upsets things if we have to block off our books from going into Canada. It makes it awkward if we have to distinguish between books that can go in and books that can’t.”

“We’ve always had Canada,” he added persuasively⁵

In light of this established practice, Toronto publishers had to scramble for Canadian rights and prove that separate editions for Canadian authors such as Charles Gordon and Robert Stead were as viable as for non-Canadians like Rudyard Kipling and Edgar Rice Burroughs.⁶

During the First World War, the McClelland, Goodchild and Stewart letterhead proclaimed the firm as “Wholesale and Import Booksellers,” and in 1920 McClelland observed, “the population of Canada was so small and operating expenses so heavy that it was necessary to combine jobbing and publishing in order to do a profitable business.”⁷ As *exclusive* agencies between the foreign publisher (the principal) and his local representative (the agent) proliferated, the “agency system” became the predominant characteristic of publishing in English Canada. An “agency publisher” – this is really a contradiction in terms – received an annual commission and a share in the profits from individual sales. The downside: Canadian agency

⁴ Marjorie Pickthall to McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart, 6 May 1916, file 6, box 122, Parker Papers, M&S Fonds.

⁵ Lovat Dickson, “The Book Trade in Canada,” *Bookseller and Stationer and Office Equipment Journal* (hereafter *B&S*) 50 (March 1934): 31. Reprinted from *The Bookseller*. Dickson did not disclose the author or title of this book.

⁶ The first Canadian author to sign separate contracts in three countries was Robert Stead, with *The Cow Puncher* (1918), through his agent A.P. Watt, according to Clarence Karr, *Authors and Audiences* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000), 70.

⁷ “Books,” *B&S* 36 (February 1920): 48.

publishers had no say in editing or advertising, had to take books they didn't want, and worse, might receive a notice in the morning mail cancelling the agency.⁸ Besides agencies, Canadian firms might also manage subsidiaries of foreign houses, which themselves imported agency books from their parent houses and also issued Canadian editions. Managing agencies and subsidiaries was time-consuming but profitable, yet lacked the satisfaction of creative publishing. When McClelland and other Toronto houses saw opportunities for original ventures, the new copyright act supported them.

When the 1921 copyright act came into force on 1 January 1924, a Canadian book – that is, a Canadian edition – carried the local publisher's imprint, without regard to its author's nationality or its place of manufacture. Because local manufacture was no longer a condition of protection for Canadian, British, or American authors, or authors of other nationalities protected within the Berne Convention, local publishers now had a bargaining advantage.⁹ (In the short run, the act also encouraged local printing.)¹⁰ A Canadian edition could be entirely produced in Canada, or partially produced here from imported plates, sheets, or bound copies, or it could be entirely produced abroad. Because American copyright required printing from type set in the United States, co-publishing ventures with US firms shared the costs of American production to include simultaneous manufacture of the Canadian edition.

Even so, a Canadian edition could still be established in the old way under licence from the foreign publisher to a local publisher. If a Canadian author went first to British or American publishers, these foreign firms normally demanded Empire / North American / world rights, for, as established above, they typically viewed Canada's market as part of their own. A Canadian edition also could be arranged by an author or her literary agent directly with a Canadian publisher, for which she granted him Canadian rights or occasionally, world rights. Literary agents such as J.B. Pinker and A.P. Watt of London supported separate contracts for their Canadian authors when

⁸ Notes from Parker interview with Hugh Kane of McClelland & Stewart, 30 January 1967, Accession no. 2015-058, M&S Fonds.

⁹ Proclamations giving each other's authors reciprocal protection were signed by Canada (23 December 1923) and the United States (29 December 1923). Canada adhered to the Berne Convention (1886), so British and international authors whose countries also adhered to it received Canadian protection.

¹⁰ See E.J. Hathaway, "Progress in the Printing of Books in Canada," *Industrial Canada* 26 (January 1926): 139-40.

negotiating rights in several markets, which included translations, first serial rights (magazines), second serial rights (newspapers), and film, radio, and stage versions. Contracts involving world rights offered the Canadian publisher a commission to find co-publishers in Britain and/or the United States if he thought the work particularly strong.

One vital, new strategy to protect the legal Canadian edition (or legally imported agency book) was a clause in the 1921 act penalizing importers of multiple copies of a book not ordered through the Canadian owner, but instead brought in by “buying around” the owner. Often these were the much-liked Colonial editions intended for Britain’s overseas markets or cheap American reprints imported by booksellers, jobbers, or educational institutions, who fought tooth and nail for the right to sell books at a lower price than publishers offered.

Canadian publishers’ strategies, then, included monitoring illegal foreign editions, asserting their Canadian rights, and financing production. Authors’ strategies usually coincided with those of publishers, but these also included maximizing royalties, clarifying rights in contracts, and monitoring the remaindering of their books. The Canadian publisher, as the owner of his edition, was more vigilant than if he were distributing a work as an agency book. Best of all, contracts for the Canadian edition usually stipulated that Canadian profits and royalties go directly to the local publisher and to the author, without a commission to the foreign publisher.

II. McClelland & Stewart (M&S)

The First World War gave John McClelland the opportunity to develop original publishing. Indeed, an impetus toward original publishing was one of the reasons why he and his first business partner Frederick Goodchild (1882-1925) left the Methodist Book and Publishing House (Toronto) in 1906. They relied on jobbing and agency importations, but their liquidity increased in 1914 when George Stewart (1876-1955) joined the partnership, bringing with him the lucrative Cambridge Bibles agency. Since wartime ocean transport of imported English books became unreliable, the firm published many Canadian editions of English authors as well as original editions by Canadians.¹¹ At war’s end, McClelland and Stewart

¹¹ George L. Parker, “The Canadian Author and Publisher in the Twentieth Century,” *Editor, Author, and Publisher: Papers Given at the Editorial Conference*,

bought out Goodchild, and the two remaining partners moved to new quarters where they shared management and salesmen with the subsidiaries of Cassells and J.M. Dent of London. M&S specialized in middle-brow best sellers and the social gospel. The public face was McClelland, a “tall, ramrod Glasgow-born Irishman,” whose motto was “Late to Bed, and Late to Rise. Hustle All Day and Advertise.”¹² To emphasize their promotion of Canadian authors, in May 1920 they hired Donald Graham French (1873-1945), a sometime teacher and journalist, to manage their new Literary Department. Like other Toronto publishers, M&S published handsome books that employed the services of Group of Seven artists like Lawren Harris and J.E.H. MacDonald, and their contemporaries like Robert E. Johnston for illustrations, end papers, and dust jackets. (See fig. 1.)

Two established celebrity authors, Charles Gordon and L.M. Montgomery, already had American publishers who held their world rights. However, McClelland secured Canadian market rights for both authors, and when their American connections were severed, he steered them to more compatible American houses.

McClelland contracted for only four Canadian editions with Gordon, whose career had begun in 1898, and who never employed a literary agent. His first novel with McClelland’s imprint was the runaway best seller *The Major* (1917), but this and Gordon’s novels until 1927 were contracted with Gordon’s New York publisher, former Torontonian George H. Doran, whose Canadian subsidiary M&S also managed until 1925-26. When Doran sold his company in late 1926, the new US firm became Doubleday, Doran, while its reconstituted Canadian representative was Doubleday, Doran and Gundy. This Toronto firm, now managed by competitor H.P. Gundy, issued Gordon’s next novel, *The Runner* (1929). To assuage McClelland’s loss, Doran loaned him the plates of Gordon’s earlier novels for a five-year period, to issue cheap reprints of *Black Rock* (1898) in 2,500 copies, and *The Man from Glengarry* (1901) in 7,550 copies.¹³

University of Toronto, November 1968, ed. William J. Howard (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 28-46.

¹² Elspeth Cameron, “Adventures in the Book Trade,” *Saturday Night* (November 1983): 30.

¹³ Prior to the sale, Doran also transferred the Canadian rights, including plates and sheets, for Hiram Cody and Marion Keith to M&S. Cody and Keith still had modest sales in Canada, and Doran sounded relieved to be rid of them. George Doran to John McClelland, 5 August 1926, Parker, “History of a Canadian Publishing House,” 241. Gordon’s printing figures, *Ibid.*, 248-49.

Figure 1. Dust jacket, Peter Donovan. *Over 'Ere and Back Home*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, [1922]. By P. O'D (pseud.) Jacket and decorations by Robert E. Johnston. TPV. Printed in Canada. 1st Impression, November 1922, 2nd Impression, December 1922.

With *The Rock and the River* (1931), Gordon came back to M&S, contracting directly with the firm for Canadian rights. Gordon's separate contract with McClelland included a royalty of 15%, an advance of \$2,500, and second serial rights in Canada would be split 50% between publisher and author.¹⁴ Gordon wrote on his contract with McClelland, "Glad to be back with you again. Hope we shall work long together."¹⁵ Encouraged by the Toronto publisher, the author also shifted to one of McClelland's principals, Dodd, Mead of New York. Frank Dodd thanked McClelland "for turning an excellent author our way."¹⁶ Dodd, Mead held Gordon's world rights for *The Rock and the River*, excluding Canada, and arranged for the British rights with Allan Lane of the Bodley Head, London, after Gordon confessed to Dodd, "Of late I have not been satisfied with [Hodder and Stoughton London]."¹⁷ Dodd suggested Lane for the British and colonial markets, a move finalized in late 1930 when Lane visited Toronto. Lane told McClelland that he was "enthusiastic at the prospect of his coming to our list ... since the death of William J. Locke we have been looking for authors to star on our list."¹⁸ Under three subsequent direct contracts with Gordon, M&S bought plates from Dodd, Mead for *The Arm of Gold* (1932): 12,737 copies in four printings by 1935; *The Girl from Glengarry* (1933): 14,029 copies in four printings by 1935; and *Torches Through the Bush* (1934): 10,116 copies in three printings by 1936.¹⁹

Although M&S issued fourteen titles by L.M. Montgomery as her Canadian publisher, her first eight novels did not appear in Canadian editions until the 1940s, and then from Ryerson Press after her death. This situation arose because Montgomery and McClelland had a falling out in 1917 with her original American publisher, L.C. Page of

¹⁴ Contract for "Light Infantry Soldier" (originally titled "Voltigeur," and published as *The Rock and the River*) between C.W. Gordon and M&S, 30 October 1930, file 5, box 122, Parker Papers, M&S Fonds.

¹⁵ Ibid., Handwritten note on Gordon's contract for *The Rock and the River*, which was returned to M&S, 5 November 1930.

¹⁶ Frank Dodd to John McClelland, 13 November 1930, file 5, box 122, Parker Papers, M&S Fonds.

¹⁷ Charles Gordon to Frank Dodd, 5 November 1930, file 5, box 122, Parker Papers, M&S Fonds.

¹⁸ Allan Lane to John McClelland, 8 January 1931, file 5, box 122, Parker Papers, M&S Fonds.

¹⁹ Parker, "History of a Canadian Publishing House," 251. The original sales records and my transcripts of Gordon's 1920s reprints and the 1930s printings are missing from the M&S Fonds.

Boston. Page's contracts for Montgomery's earliest books – including the first, *Anne of Green Gables* – offered her 10% royalty on the wholesale price (rather than retail) and contained “binding” clauses that obligated the author to give Page first refusal on subsequent manuscripts.²⁰ Too late she realized, “They were *crooks* but I did not know this.”²¹ When the fifth book, *Anne of the Island* (1915), sold poorly, Page rejected her next manuscript *The Watchman and Other Poems* (1916). Montgomery saw her opportunity to escape Page, and she approached McClelland, who opened his arms to her.²² Their contract gave him the Canadian and British rights, and acting like a literary agent, he arranged for Frederick A. Stokes of New York, a publisher of books for young people, to publish it in the United States.²³ As a variation on the usual procedure, *The Watchman* was printed in Canada, its sheets bound in the United States for Stokes' edition, and Constable of London imported the Canadian sheets for its 1920 edition. She signed three other separate contracts with McClelland, *Anne's House of Dreams* (1917), *The Blue Castle* (1926) and *Mistress Pat* (1935), while Stokes held American, Australian, and Canadian rights for her other novels. Meanwhile, through the 1920s Montgomery endured prolonged court cases in her attempts to regain royalties that Page withheld.²⁴

²⁰ Mary Rubio, *Lucy Maud Montgomery: The Gift of Wings* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2008), 140.

²¹ L.M. Montgomery to G.B. MacMillan, 10 February 1929, *My Dear Mr. M: Letters to G.B. MacMillan from L.M. Montgomery*, ed. Francis W.P. Bolger and Elizabeth Epperly (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1980), 141. Page did a similar job on William Kirby, Bliss Carman, Marshall Saunders, and Charles G.D. Roberts.

L.C. Page's Catalogue at the back of *Further Chronicles of Avonlea* (1920) lists the following printings: *Anne of Green Gables*: 45; *Anne of Avonlea*: 30; *Anne of the Island*: 15; *Kilmeny of the Orchard*: 13; *The Story Girl*: 10; *Chronicles of Avonlea*: 8; and *The Golden Road*: 6.

²² Parker interview with John McClelland, 31 August 1967. McClelland gestured with his arms spread open. Interview in the personal archives of the author.

²³ Montgomery “chose John McClelland ... as her new publisher and literary agent.” See Rubio, *Lucy Maud Montgomery*, 225.

²⁴ The court proceedings are described in Rubio, 220–252, and in Carole Gerson, “‘Dragged at Anne's Chariot Wheels:’ The Triangle of Author, Publisher, and Fictional Character,” *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*, ed. Irene Gammel and Elizabeth Epperly (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 49–63.

Anne of Green Gables

L. M. MONTGOMERY

*The good stars met in your horoscope,
Made you of spirit and fire and dew.*

—BROWNING.

Toronto
THE RYERSON PRESS

Figure 2. Title page, L.M. Montgomery. *Anne of Green Gables*. Toronto Ryerson, [1942]. TPV. First Canadian edition, April, 1942. This copy is the 11th reprinting, 1958. Printed in Canada.

Ryerson's *Anne* went through eleven printings by 1958,²⁵ for *Anne* remained a prize property in Canada and the United States. (See fig. 2.) M&S finally secured rights to it after mid-century when Montgomery's son Chester MacDonald sold his Ryerson rights to M&S; Jack McClelland (the son of John McClelland) used *Anne*'s profits to publish new Canadian authors.²⁶ When Ferrar, Straus & Giroux purchased Page's company in 1957, Roger Straus acknowledged that the American rights for *Anne* clinched that deal.²⁷ *Anne of Green Gables* is the only book of its period in print that does not rely on textbook sales.

Bliss Carman, who supplied a blurb for *Anne of Green Gables*,²⁸ also had run-ins with his US publisher L.C. Page that affected arrangements he made with McClelland in the 1920s.²⁹ M&S had distributed Carman's recent volumes with another of the poet's US publishers, Small, Maynard of Boston. During Carman's 1921 visit to Toronto he and McClelland agreed on his first Canadian edition, *Later Poems* (1921). It combined the Small, Maynard volumes, *April Airs*, *Echoes from Vagabondia*, and *The Rough Rider* with several new poems. Carman turned down the plan for a "selected anthology" envisioned by Donald French and Rufus Hathaway because it might have included earlier poems copyrighted by L.C. Page.³⁰ M&S paid Small, Maynard a 10% royalty, and because of a printers' strike in Boston, Herbert Small delayed his edition for several months. Possibly

²⁵ Information from the copyright page of Ryerson's 1958 reprinting of *Anne of Green Gables*.

²⁶ Rubio, *Lucy Maud Montgomery*, 590.

²⁷ Ibid., 223. See Boris Kachka, *Hothouse: The Art of Survival and the Survival of Art at America's Most Celebrated Publishing House, Farrar, Straus and Giroux* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013), 123.

²⁸ In my copy of Page's *Anne of Green Gables*, Tenth Impression, June 1909, Page's announcement for *Anne of Avonlea* (1909) includes Carman's comment: "I see that she has become one of the popular young ladies of the season, but I can assure you that if she has no one else to love her, I should still be her most devoted admirer And I take it as a great test of the worth of the book that while the young people are rummaging all over the house looking for Anne, the head of the family has carried her off to read on his way to town" [2].

²⁹ After one such incident in 1906, Carman wrote to a friend, "I wish I had never had him as a publisher. He is too sharp for me, and I am going to 'cut him out.'" Carman to Irving Way, 1 January 1906, *The Letters of Bliss Carman*, ed. H. Pearson Gundy (Kingston & Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981), 151.

³⁰ Bliss Carman to John McClelland, 17 September 1921, file 5, box 122, Parker Papers, M&S Fonds.

the same plates were used for each edition because only the title pages vary. The Toronto edition, with cover designs by J.E.H. MacDonald and his son Thoreau MacDonald, was sold out by April 1922, but the second and third printings in 1922 were issued only in Canada. (See fig. 3.) The three printings had runs of 1,260 copies each,³¹ followed by a fourth printing in 1923 and a fifth in 1926. Page subsequently refused to grant permissions for a collected edition, after which Carman wrote his friend and fellow writer Peter McArthur, "So I am inclined to think that the publishing fraternity are a bunch of sharps and weak sisters, and if you have any choice epithets in your vocabulary of oburgations will you be kind enough on my behalf to consign the aforementioned firms jointly and severally to flames of utmost perdition."³²

Figure 3. Title page, Bliss Carman. *Later Poems*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, [1921]. Decorations by J.E.H. MacDonald. Printed in Canada. Courtesy of Special Collections, Dalhousie University Library.

McClelland intended his next Carman collection, *Ballads and Lyrics* (1923), for the Canadian market only, but Herbert Small decided

³¹ Parker, "History of a Canadian Publishing House," 267.

³² Bliss Carman to Peter McArthur, 23 June 1922 (p. 290) and Carman to Peter McArthur, 21 October 1922, (p. 296), both in *The Letters of Bliss Carman*.

to issue an American edition in 1924.³³ Meanwhile, Carman read the final draft of his friend Odell Shepard's *Bliss Carman* (M&S, 1923), a bio-critical study that was edited by Donald French.³⁴ In 1924 McClelland suggested chap books, to which Carman readily agreed. (Possibly McClelland had wind of Lorne Pierce's plans for the Ryerson Chapbook series that would begin in 1925.) For the 65-page *Far Horizons* (1925), issued only in Canada, Carman's royalty was 15% on the first 2,000 copies sold, rising to 20% thereafter.³⁵ The two printings of 1,500 and 1,000 copies were sold by Carman on his reading tours. When Small, Maynard failed in 1926, Carman's copyrights with the firm were acquired by Frank Dodd, a neighbour of Carman and his patron Mary Perry King in New Haven, Connecticut. Thereafter Dodd, Mead issued Carman's books in the United States, and M&S in Canada; these were edited by Lorne Pierce, who sometimes undertook writing and editorial work outside of his official duties at Ryerson.

Similar publication arrangements continued after Carman's death in 1929. For the 546-page *Bliss Carman's Poems* (1931), his first literary executor Mary Perry King gave M&S exclusive Canadian rights, and Dodd, Mead the remaining world rights. This volume was edited by Pierce with help from Shepard. King thought Frank Dodd a "dear," but was annoyed that McClelland "decends [sic] to fighting."³⁶ L.C. Page suggested that Dodd, Mead publish the collection in three volumes and pay him a "prohibitive royalty on the volume containing his material."³⁷ While the single-volume edition prevailed, neither she nor Dodd nor Carman's sometime publisher Mitchell Kennerley successfully negotiated for more reasonable permissions. For the patience Pierce showed in the face of all of these problems, McClelland especially thanked him: "I appreciate very much indeed

³³ Bliss Carman to Peter McArthur, 7 July 1923, in *The Letters of Bliss Carman*, 310. Carman notes that "*Later Poems* has done encouragingly well."

³⁴ M&S deposited in the Copyright Office, Ottawa, dummy copies of *April Airs*, *Echoes from Vagabondia*, *Last Songs from Vagabondia*, *More Songs from Vagabondia*, and *Songs from Vagabondia*. This provided Canadian copyright for poems used in Odell Shepard's *Bliss Carman* (McClelland & Stewart, 1923), which was published only in Canada.

³⁵ Parker, "History of a Canadian Publishing House," 268.

³⁶ Mary Perry King to Lorne Pierce, 2 September 1929, folder 6, box 3; Mary Perry King to Lorne Pierce, 13 January 1930, folder 2, box 4. Both in: Lorne Pierce Papers (hereafter Pierce Papers), Queen's University Archives.

³⁷ Mary Perry King to Lorne Pierce, 1 May 1931, folder 7, box 4, Pierce Papers.

all that you have done in connection with the Bliss Carman book, and it was good of you to spend so much time on it."³⁸

McClelland's established relationship with Dodd, Mead facilitated the acquisition of the first of his three new Prairie authors, Martha Ostenso. Ostenso was also the most successful with *Wild Geese* (1925), her only work published by M&S. (See fig. 4.) *Wild Geese* won the \$13,000 Pictorial Review-Famous Players-Lasky prize, which included book publication by Dodd, Mead. Because she was a Canadian resident in the United States, Dodd, Mead urged M&S to publish the novel quickly in Canada, in order to forestall a printer from invoking the licensing clause in the copyright law permitting him to print the work of a Canadian author that was not issued within a specified time period of its publication elsewhere. Dodd, Mead sold a set of plates for \$595 to M&S, which also paid 44¢ a copy on a first edition of 5,000. The four Toronto printings that year totalled 12,500 copies,³⁹ while its international sales were over 250,000 copies. Ostenso's later books were published by Dodd, Mead's Toronto subsidiary, which was managed by M&S.

Figure 4. Title page, Martha Ostenso. *Wild Geese*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1925. Printed in Canada.

³⁸ John McClelland to Lorne Pierce, 13 March 1931, folder 8, box 4, Pierce Papers.

³⁹ Letter contracts between Dodd, Mead and M&S, 21 November 1924 and 5 May 1925, Parker, "History of a Canadian Publishing House," 230-31.

M&S's second Prairie author, Frederick Philip Grove, never understood why people "reach for such trash as *Wild Geese*."⁴⁰ After his moderate success with two books of essays, Grove would depart M&S when the firm rejected his first novel. Born Felix Paul Greve in Germany, he immigrated to the United States in 1909 and settled in Manitoba around 1912, where he became a teacher, already having changed his name and fictionalized his early years in Europe and New York. He submitted the MS of his winter journeys, *Over Prairie Trails* (1922), to M&S in 1919. When publication was delayed for over two years owing to the economic downturn, the skeptical Grove dismissed this as an excuse for M&S's lack of commitment. Its first printing of 1,000 copies sold out but the second one in 1923 "fell flat," a phrase Grove made his own.⁴¹ The much revised *The Turn of the Year* (1923), dedicated to his mentor, Professor Arthur Phelps of Winnipeg, fell "still-born from the press."⁴² Since McClelland had failed to secure co-publication for either of the books of essays, he rejected Grove's excessively long first novel *Settlers of the Marsh*. It was rare in those days for a Canadian publisher to risk financing a novel that was not also published abroad.

In the 1920s, M&S published three books by his third Prairie author, Laura Goodman Salverson. Her first novel, *The Viking Heart* (1923), appeared under the M&S imprint and was later acclaimed as "the first Canadian ethnic novel in English";⁴³ it drew on the hardships of her Icelandic family, who emigrated when she was a child to Wisconsin and then to Manitoba. In her memoir *Confessions of an Immigrant's Daughter* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1939), she describes her apprenticeship as a working-class woman writer whose first language was not English, and the support of her mentors, Austin Bothwell,

⁴⁰ Frederick Philip Grove to Henry Miller, 14 November 1926, *The Letters of Frederick Philip Grove*, ed. Desmond Pacey (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 41.

⁴¹ Frederick Philip Grove, *In Search of Myself* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1946), 368. The figures are Grove's; there are no printing records in the McClelland & Stewart archival holdings at McMaster. The 1923 issue of *Over Prairie Trails* indicates a first printing in December 1922 and a second one in December 1923.

⁴² Thomas Saunders, "Introduction," *Settlers of the Marsh* by Frederick Philip Grove (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1965), vii. See also Frederick Philip Grove to Catherine Grove, 31 October 1928, *The Letters of Frederick Philip Grove*, 201, note 1.

⁴³ Neil Ten Kortenaar, "Multiculturalism and Globalization," *The Cambridge History of Canadian Literature*, ed. Coral Ann Howells and Eva Marie Kröller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 561.

the Regina teacher who encouraged her to write about her own people, and J.A. Cranston, who published her stories in the *Toronto Star Weekly*. At a Winnipeg literary evening where there were the usual speculations about *the great Canadian novel*, she met Nellie McClung, who offered advice about *The Viking Heart*. Salverson does not mention the name of the publisher who accepted the MS on the basis of its first 1,800 words, but in the preface to its 1947 edition, she thanks Donald French, “who made [Bothwell’s] faith a reality.”⁴⁴ *The Viking Heart* was published in the United States by George H. Doran, which supplied M&S with plates. It was reprinted by M&S in 1925, 1929, and in a slightly revised edition in 1947. Her contracts with M&S for two subsequent works, “Johann Lind” (3 June 1924) and *Lord of the Silver Dragon* (21 July 1926), offered a 12½ % royalty on the first 2,000 copies sold and 15 % thereafter. The publisher had “permission to arrange for sale outside Canada.” She retained the secondary rights, for which sales the publisher would receive 20 % commission, and he was given first refusal on her next two books.⁴⁵ These publications did not unfold as planned.

Prior to the appearance of either of those contracted works, Salverson’s next publication with M&S was her poetry volume *Wayside Gleams* (1925), which was not well received. She gave her second novel, *When Sparrows Fall* (1925), to Nellie McClung’s publisher, Thomas Allen. Like *The Viking Heart*, this was a realistic contemporary novel, but Salverson then switched to historical romances about Icelandic and Norse adventurers.⁴⁶ *Lord of the Silver Dragon* (1927), which was printed in Toronto with handsome designs and end papers by J.E.H. MacDonald and his son Thoreau MacDonald, turned out to be her final book with M&S. “Johann Lind” (1928) ended up as a seven-part serial in Winnipeg’s *Western Home Monthly*, and she complained to book reviewer William Arthur Deacon about the “plot-mechanical stunts” she was forced to add to

⁴⁴ Laura Goodman Salverson, *The Viking Heart*, rev. ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1947), vii.

⁴⁵ M&S contracts with Laura Goodman Salverson, 3 June 1924 and 21 July 1916, file 6, box 122, Parker Papers, M&S Fonds.

⁴⁶ Salverson confided to William Arthur Deacon she did not want “to write sex stuff nor do a series of *Viking Hearts*,” but a “real book,” an “historical novel” about Lief the Lucky. Laura Goodman Salverson to William Arthur Deacon, [April 1926], *Dear Bill; The Correspondence of William Arthur Deacon*, ed. John Lennox and Michèle Lacombe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 65–66.

make it entertaining.⁴⁷ By the early 1930s, she had shifted to Ryerson, where Lorne Pierce lent a sympathetic ear to her difficulties. Thus three promising Prairie authors were lost to M&S.

III. The Ryerson Press

The Methodist Book and Publishing House under its long-serving Book Steward, the Rev. William Briggs (1836-1922), had once been Canada's leading publishing firm, a reputation that dimmed during the war years.⁴⁸ When the new Book Steward, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Wesley Fallis (1866-1932), became manager in 1919, he largely dropped the custom of charging authors for production costs, and unlike Briggs, opted not to use his name as the imprint on the trade books. Instead, he introduced The Ryerson Press as a separate division and imprint from his denominational publications. Determined to make Ryerson a "publishing house of national significance," in 1920 he hired an idealistic young Methodist minister, Dr. Lorne Pierce, as Book Editor and Literary Advisor to develop new Canadian textbooks and discover new Canadian talent.⁴⁹ Pierce's mission, according to his diary, was to make Ryerson the "cultural mecca of Canada."⁵⁰

There's a famous story about the undergraduate Pierce asking his Queen's University English professor about Canadian literature. In reply, James Cappon recited a verse from popular poet Robert Service's "The Ballad of Blasphemous Bill," and stressed part of one line, "It didn't matter a damn." Not satisfied with this put-down, Pierce turned to his own copy of recently published W.W. Campbell's *Oxford Book of Canadian Verse* (1913) with the energy and curiosity that marked his career.⁵¹ This career was not always smooth sailing: Pierce's older associates, Ernest W. Walker, who managed the agency selections and publication of foreign authors, and E.J. Moore, whose editorial responsibilities (and some promotional ones) would now

⁴⁷ Laura Goodman Salverson to William Arthur Deacon, 1 February 1931, *Dear Bill*, 121.

⁴⁸ After the June 1925 union of the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches in Canada, the House was renamed The United Church Publishing House.

⁴⁹ W. Stewart Wallace, *The Ryerson Imprint* (Toronto: Ryerson, [1954]), 8.

⁵⁰ Pierce's diary cited in Janet B. Friskney, "The Years before Union: Samuel Fallis, Lorne Pierce, and The Ryerson Press, 1919-1926," *Épilogue* 13 (1998-2003): 75.

⁵¹ C.H. Dickinson, *Lorne Pierce. A Profile* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1965), 1-2, 54.

overlap with Pierce's role, continually defended the profitable agency titles over Canadian books, which may have represented about ten percent of Ryerson's revenues.

Pierce nevertheless soon charged into his first major – and expensive – original trade-book project, *The Makers of Canadian Literature* (1923-25), a series that never had a co-publisher abroad.⁵² Pierce slated so many titles from his contributors in its first year that Bliss Carman questioned how even one manuscript could be written and produced in several months – “a performance in the light of the miraculous” – while critic John Daniel Logan warned Pierce not to let Hugh Eayrs and John McClelland “steal your powder.”⁵³ Although \$500 payments went to many contributors, only thirteen of the projected volumes were issued. Indeed, Dr. Fallis became so worried about the financing that he cancelled the series in early 1926. In spite of this setback, Pierce had already established himself by publishing Carman, Logan, and Peter MacArthur, and newcomers William Arthur Deacon, Frederick Philip Grove, and E.J. Pratt.⁵⁴

Pierce's efforts toward Bliss Carman were part of his grand strategy to possess the Confederation poets Charles G.D. Roberts, Duncan Campbell Scott, and their successor Marjorie Pickthall. Ryerson was not Carman's official publisher because L.C. Page and Dodd, Mead held Carman's world rights, and M&S the Canadian ones. However, as his literary executor, Pierce promoted the Carman industry and cleverly found ways to bring elements of the poet's work under the Ryerson imprint. Without signing any contracts with Carman, Pierce arranged for his secretary Blanche Hume to transcribe and edit a Carman pamphlet, *Talks on Poetry and Life. Five Lectures Delivered before the University of Toronto, December 1925*. To compete with Odell's book on Carman, Pierce contracted James Cappon for *Bliss Carman and the Literary Currents and Influences of his Time* (1930). Pierce also secured Carman's revisions to the 1913 *Oxford Book of*

⁵² The exception was Victor Lauriston's *Arthur Stringer* (1941), published by Ryerson and by Bobbs-Merrill (Stringer's American publisher) long after the series had closed down.

⁵³ Bliss Carman to Lorne Pierce, 10 November 1922, *The Letters of Bliss Carman*, 296, and J.D. Logan to Lorne Pierce, 18 September 1922, folder 2, box 1, Pierce Papers.

⁵⁴ See Margery Fee, “Lorne Pierce, Ryerson Press, and the Makers of Canadian Literature Series,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada / Cahiers de la Société bibliographique du Canada* (hereafter *Papers/Cahiers*) 24 (1985): 51-71; and Sandra Campbell, *Both Hands: A Life of Lorne Pierce of Ryerson Press*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 213-31.

Canadian Verse from S.B. Gundy; its new version, which eradicated any link with Oxford, was the popular textbook, *Our Canadian Literature. Representative Verse, English and French* (1935). Published six years after the poet's death, it listed Pierce and Carman as co-editors.

Pierce's commitment to the younger Prairie writers Grove and Salverson arose from quite a different source. He admired them for their depiction of the harsh pioneer conditions of the prairies, the accuracy of which he recognized from his own experiences as a probationary minister in Saskatchewan. He understood they were breaking new ground with their contemporary accounts of western settlement.

By the time the manuscript for Frederick Philip Grove's *Settlers of the Marsh* reached Pierce at Ryerson, its three-volume epic version "Pioneers" had been rejected by M&S in January 1924 and its one-volume version in February 1925.⁵⁵ In February of 1924, Hugh Eayrs of Macmillan of Canada advised cutting the first part of the trilogy by two-thirds, but he nevertheless rejected this realistic depiction of a farmer captivated by a fallen woman because "no book of the kind stood a chance in Canada."⁵⁶ Through 1924 Grove was "slashing the book to pieces," into a one-volume novel entitled "The White Range-Line House." This was the version also rejected by M&S in February 1925. That same month in Winnipeg, Arthur Phelps introduced Grove to Pierce, who glanced through the MS, thought it a "classic," and took a risk on it.⁵⁷ Grove's search for trustworthy publishers then got off on the wrong foot with a contract to which he was not privy.

Settlers of the Marsh was issued on 25 September 1925 by George H. Doran and Ryerson Press. Doran supplied Ryerson with 2,272 sheets and dust jackets.⁵⁸ Previously, on 26 May 1925, Ryerson, "hereinafter called the Author," had signed a contract with Doran, "hereinafter called the Publisher," who would hold the American copyright and the right to sell the book in other markets. Doran would pay Ryerson a 10% royalty on the retail price of the first 5,000 copies sold, and 15% thereafter. Grove never saw this contract, and was unaware of standard clauses like #6, that if the book were sold at half price, the royalty would be halved, or #18, that "if after two years and no further

⁵⁵ Margaret R. Stobie, *Frederick Philip Grove* (New York: Twayne, 1973), 138.

⁵⁶ Grove, *The Letters of Frederick Philip Grove*, 42, note 2, and Grove, *In Search of Myself*, 379.

⁵⁷ Campbell, 248.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 249.

sales anticipated, Publisher will dispose of the book," which normally meant remaindering the book or selling sheets to a reprint house, with no further royalties for the author.⁵⁹ Months later when Grove complained he had no agreement with Doran, E.J. Moore apologized for "a little misunderstanding regarding a definite contract," and sent one.⁶⁰ This contract dated 14 December 1925 between Grove, "hereinafter termed the 'Author,'" and Ryerson, "hereinafter termed the 'Publisher,'" represented by Dr. Fallis, was for the Canadian market only. Ryerson's royalty was also 10% on the same terms as Doran's, and Ryerson would also pay him Doran's royalties, less a commission of 10%. Clause 6 stipulated the author's changes to the original MS would be deducted from royalties.⁶¹

The reception of *Settlers* was as noteworthy as its contracts. L.M. Montgomery called the novel, "A great and fascinating work of fiction. Its franker pages have the simplicity of the Bible."⁶² Grove approved of S. Morgan-Powell's review in the Montreal *Star*, but found most of the others "singularly unintelligent."⁶³ Dr. Fallis, furious that Ryerson had published this notorious book, was mollified only when Prime Minister Arthur Meighen praised him for having "enough guts" to publish it.⁶⁴ When Grove saw dust jacket promoting it as a "North Country Romance," he complained to Pierce, and told Moore that this inappropriate label had killed the sales and led important reviewers like H.L. Mencken to ignore it. (See fig. 5.) He also pointed out the book "swarms with misprints."⁶⁵ A year later, in October 1926, Grove angrily returned a postal note for a 90¢ royalty from Ryerson, complaining he was owed \$27.81. When he

⁵⁹ Agreement between Ryerson Press and George H. Doran, 26 May 1925, Ryerson Press, file 29, box 10, Board of Publication Papers (hereafter BP Papers), 83.061C, United Church of Canada Archives.

⁶⁰ E.J. Moore to Frederick Philip Grove, 14 December 1925, Correspondence A - K, Correspondence Series, Locator 2001-2-1, Pierce Papers.

⁶¹ Agreement between Frederick Philip Grove and Ryerson Press, 14 December 1925, file 29, box 10, BP Papers.

⁶² Ryerson's advertisement for *Settlers of the Marsh* with Montgomery's blurb, *B&S* 41 (August 1925): 49.

⁶³ Frederick Philip Grove to E.J. Moore, 30 November 1925, Correspondence A - K, Correspondence Series, Locator 2001-2-1, Pierce Papers.

⁶⁴ Grove, *The Letters of Frederick Philip Grove*, 42, note 3. The phrase is Lorne Pierce's.

⁶⁵ Frederick Philip Grove to Lorne Pierce, 12 September 1925, re. the Doran dust jacket. Grove to E.J. Moore, 21 December 1925, re. the lack of a review by Mencken. Grove to Moore, 17 November 1925, re. the misprints. Correspondence A - K, Correspondence Series, Locator 2001-2-1, Pierce Papers.

disputed the \$46 charge for corrections for printers' errors, he was told to take up the matter with Doran, but he rightly argued he had no dealings with Doran. To Pierce on 22 January 1927, he itemized his dissatisfactions with Ryerson, hinted at a lawsuit, and asserted, "It is not I who make profit out of my books."⁶⁶

Unknown to Grove, by the spring of 1926 when sales of *Settlers* faltered, Doran sold the American reprint rights to Grosset & Dunlap, whose edition appeared in 1927. In early 1928 Grove discovered this 75¢ cheap American edition competing in Ontario and Manitoba with Ryerson's \$2.00 edition – clearly an instance of "buying around" by the department stores Eaton's and Simpson's, and other booksellers. At recently restructured Doubleday, Doran in New York, Stanley Rinehart, aware that the reprint was not legal in Canada, assured Ernest Walker at Ryerson that "I will do everything possible to stop it here and prevent its recurrence."⁶⁷ For all its notoriety in Canada, by early 1928 *Settlers* had sold only 3,685 copies, which included 1,927 copies of the Grosset & Dunlap reprint.⁶⁸ Grove condemned the publication of *Settlers* as "an unmitigated disaster," probably because he preferred the original longer version.⁶⁹ By that time Ryerson had failed to find an American co-publisher for Grove's next manuscript, *Our Daily Bread*, and so rejected it, unwilling to risk money on a Canadian edition alone. Still, Grove had his best year ever when Henry Miller of Graphic Press published *A Search for America* (1927); its second printing was a book club offering by Graphic's Carillon Club. A new edition printed by Louis Carrier in 1928 was distributed by Carrier in Montreal and New York, and by Brentano's in London.⁷⁰

After Pierce's second Prairie writer Laura Goodman Salverson moved to Ryerson, her most successful book was not historical romances or contemporary realist novels, but her memoir *Confessions of an Immigrant's Daughter* (1939). Ryerson held exclusive rights in

⁶⁶ Frederick Philip Grove to Lorne Pierce, 27 January 1927, Ryerson Press, file 9, box 10, BP Papers. This letter is not in the Pierce Collection nor in Grove's *Letters*. Possibly Pierce was not directly involved in either agreement.

⁶⁷ Stanley Rinehart to E.W. Walker, 26 April 1928, Ryerson Press, file 9, box 10, BP Papers.

⁶⁸ Frederick Philip Grove to Watson Kirkconnell, 24 January 1928, *The Letters of Frederick Philip Grove*, 77.

⁶⁹ Grove, *In Search of Myself*, 387.

⁷⁰ Stobie, *Frederick Philip Grove*, see Chapters 11 and 12 for Grove's publishing career and his relations with Graphic and Carrier, 140-46. Other passages describe relations with Brentano's in London, Macmillan of Canada, M&S, and Ryerson.

Figure 5. Back of dust jacket, Frederick Philip Grove. *Settlers of the Marsh*. Toronto: Ryerson, 1925. The novel was promoted as a "North Country Romance." Courtesy of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

Canada for these books. In his efforts to market Salverson abroad, Pierce placed each of her books in the 1930s with different English publishers. Ryerson's editions of *The Dove* (1933), *The Dark Weaver* (1937), *Black Lace* (1938), and *Confessions* used the sheets of their English co-publishers. Salverson's contract with Sampson Low, Marston for the contemporary *The Dark Weaver* (Ryerson, 1937; Sampson Low, 1938), which won the Governor-General's Award for fiction, permitted the publisher to sell its edition and any cheap reprints in the British Colonies and Dependencies, with the exception of Canada.⁷¹ The *Confessions* used the Faber and Faber sheets, and it won the Governor-General's Award for non-fiction. Although critically acclaimed, the memoir suffered poor sales, which were blamed on its appearance just as war broke out. (Salverson told William Arthur Deacon her royalty cheque was only \$3.26.)⁷² Her final book contracted with Ryerson, *Immortal Rock. The Saga of the Kensington Stone* (1954), was printed in Canada. For four years she sent batches of this MS to Pierce as she coped with poverty, illness, a broken typewriter, and several revisions. "The aged author simply has to finish the job," the self-effacing Salverson told Pierce.⁷³ Of 1,510 copies printed in Canada, 911 copies were sold by early 1957, and her royalties were less than \$300.⁷⁴ It was also printed and published in London in 1955 by the Australian house Angus and Robertson, probably using the Canadian plates.

The most important author Pierce won and then lost in the inter-war period was E.J. Pratt, whose second book of poetry, *Newfoundland Verse* (1923), appeared from Ryerson. Like Pierce, the Newfoundland-born Pratt had trained for the Methodist ministry; unlike Pierce, he subsequently abandoned it and, at Pelham Edgar's invitation, joined the English Department at Victoria College, Toronto. Pratt asked Pierce on 16 January 1923 to drop the "professor designation" from publicity because he was not officially a professor, and also asked the publisher to find him an English imprint.⁷⁵ The poet's amiable

⁷¹ Contract between L.G. Salverson and Sampson Low, Marston, [27 May 1937], Ryerson Press, file 30, box 29, BP Papers.

⁷² Laura Goodman Salverson to William Arthur Deacon, 9 August 1941, *Dear Bill*, 186.

⁷³ Laura Goodman Salverson to Lorne Pierce, undated letter, winter 1951, file 011, box 20, (Correspondence R - S 1951), Pierce Papers.

⁷⁴ Campbell, *Both Hands*, 589, note 111. The pagination of both editions is 267 pages; possibly the London edition was printed from plates sent by Ryerson.

⁷⁵ E.J. Pratt to Lorne Pierce, 16 January 1923, folder 6, box 1, Pierce Papers.

feelings for Pierce were reflected in letters that began “Dear old thing,”⁷⁶ and in invitations to boozy stag parties at Pratt’s cottage. Still, Pratt believed that promotion for the book was inadequate, but he attributed that shortcoming to Fallis, Moore, and Walker, whom he believed were at best half-hearted about modernist poetry. When Pierce offered apologies, he brushed them aside, asserting, “I should like to know why M. has consistently ignored the volume in his otherwise exhaustive list of new publications” (50 titles that year).⁷⁷ Pratt knew *Newfoundland Verse* received good reviews country-wide, from S. Morgan-Powell in the Montreal *Star* to Bernard McEvoy in the Vancouver *Province*.⁷⁸ That likely made the languid publicity efforts of Pierce’s colleagues all the more frustrating. With his friends William Arthur Deacon, Beaumont Cornell, and Paul Wallace, Pratt informed Pierce how “apathy if not antagonism from a certain quarter was neutralizing your efforts.”⁷⁹ That quarter was Moore, that “fat-head in the east of the building,” and they embarrassed Pierce by privately confronting Dr. Fallis about the book’s many typographical errors.⁸⁰ 1,000 copies of *Newfoundland Verse* cost \$485, and 425 were bound at a cost of \$102.40.⁸¹ Despite efforts to do so, Pierce could not place the book abroad.

Even in the face of these frustrations, Pratt gave Pierce first refusal on the manuscript of *The Witches’ Brew*, but this time he pressed Pierce to be aggressive about finding a foreign publisher: “An American publisher naturally likes to see a prospective Canadian volume justify itself in its homeland by review and sale.”⁸² The saturnalia of drunken sea creatures featured in the text caused a sensation when Fallis, Moore, and Walker read it, and in that decade of prohibition they declined it as inappropriate for a church-affiliated publisher. Again Pierce apologized to Pratt, “I hope the timidity of

⁷⁶ E.J. Pratt to Lorne Pierce, 16 April 1923, folder 6, box 1, Pierce Papers.

⁷⁷ E.J. Pratt to Lorne Pierce, undated, before 29 November 1923, folder 6, box 1, Pierce Papers.

⁷⁸ E.J. Pratt to Lorne Pierce, 1 December 1923, folder 6, box 1, Pierce Papers.

⁷⁹ Pratt to Pierce, undated, before 29 November 1923, folder 6, box 1, Pierce Papers.

⁸⁰ David Pitt, *E.J. Pratt: The Truant Years 1882-1927* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 251.

⁸¹ Internal Memo to Lorne Pierce, 6 January 1923, for the manufacture of *Newfoundland Verse*, 6 January 1923, 1,000 copies at \$425.00, or 2,000 copies @ \$625.00, folder 3, box 1. “Production cost, 29 February 1924, Balance of Edition, manufacturing cost of 512 copies at 20¢ = \$102.40, for binding only,” folder 10, box 1. Both in Pierce Papers.

⁸² E.J. Pratt to Lorne Pierce, 1 December 1923, folder 10, box 1, Pierce Papers.

our publishing house is not prevalent among other publishers in town and that you will be successful with them.”⁸³ When Frederick Stokes and George H. Doran rejected it, Pratt and Pierce briefly considered sending it to S.B. Gundy.⁸⁴ In fact, Pratt himself found a publisher. In the spring of 1924 Pelham Edgar sent the MS to Constable, but while Pratt was in London that summer he paid Selwyn & Blount £50 to print 1,000 copies.⁸⁵ Selwyn & Blount’s imprint is 1925, but the volume was not published until February 1926 because the firm wanted a Canadian publisher to take it. Selwyn & Blount also agreed to sell *Newfoundland Verse* in England. Even though he left Ryerson after only one book, Pratt was always grateful to Pierce: “You are one of a half-dozen whose judgment I value most highly.”⁸⁶

IV. Macmillan of Canada (MCC)

In 1921 English-born Hugh Eayrs was chosen as president of the Macmillan Company of Canada (MCC) by its London, UK, parent Macmillans. He succeeded Frank Wise, who had abruptly resigned.⁸⁷ Before 1920 MCC distributed textbooks issued by the London and New York offices of Macmillans and was “an importing house” for their agencies, but Eayrs decided that “the house should definitely be allied with the work of men and women within our borders.”⁸⁸ The stout, blond Eayrs was witty and convivial, gave his authors splendid book launches, and insisted they be “measured by the yardstick of

⁸³ Lorne Pierce to E.J. Pratt, 16 December 1924, folder 10, box 1, Pierce Papers.

⁸⁴ Frederick A. Stokes to E.W. Walker, 17 January 1924; Lorne Pierce to E.J. Pratt, 4 April 1924, (Doran rejects *Witches’ Brew*); E.J. Pratt to Lorne Pierce, 18 December 1924. They both consider offering it to S.B. Gundy. All in folder 10, box 1, Pierce Papers.

⁸⁵ E.J. Pratt to Lorne Pierce, 24 September 1924, folder 10, box 1, Pierce Papers. Pratt’s payment to Selwyn & Blount: E.J. Pratt, *The Complete Poems. Part I*, ed. Sandra Djwa and R.G. Moyles (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 383.

⁸⁶ E.J. Pratt to Lorne Pierce, 4 August 1927, folder 9, box 2, Pierce Papers.

⁸⁷ “New head of Macmillans in Canada,” *Canadian Bookman*, 3 (June 1921): 49. The departure of Frank Wise is described in A.B. McKillop, “Mystery at Macmillan: The Sudden Departure of President Frank Wise from Macmillan of Canada in 1921,” *Papers/Cahiers* 38/1 (Spring 2000): 73–103; and by Ruth Panofsky, *The Literary Legacy of the Macmillan Company of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 57–64, 71–72.

⁸⁸ “Producing Books for Future Generations,” *B&S* 41 (December 1925): 64.

accepted British and continental standards,”⁸⁹ but he could be short-tempered and vindictive. He introduced several series of Canadian textbooks, and among the talented young people he hired were his secretary Ellen Elliott (1900-1968), the first woman to become an executive in Canadian publishing, and John Morgan Gray (1907-1978), the educational salesman who became president of MCC in 1946.⁹⁰

Although the Canadian subsidiary was accountable to both London and New York, Eayrs had some autonomy, which was to be tested almost immediately. When he signed contracts with Canadian authors who gave him exclusive Canadian rights and sometimes world rights, or directed him to secure foreign publication, he was not acting as a subsidiary but as a publisher in his own right. Normally he offered his authors to the other two Macmillan offices, but if they declined, he turned to other foreign houses, often ones that MCC represented in Canada.

Eayrs’ first impulsive decision was to publish *Maria Chapdelaine* (1921), by French émigré Louis Hémon, in an excellent translation by W.H. Blake. Even though it gained international success, in September 1921 Sir Frederick Macmillan wrote Eayrs with the same caution he had once given Wise, “nothing is easier than to drop money on general [trade book] publishing, and I hope that before undertaking anything other than schoolbooks ... at your own risk you will consult us as to committing yourself.”⁹¹ Certainly, the MCC edition of *Maria Chapdelaine* wasn’t entirely smooth sailing. Fortunately, though, through the 1920s Eayrs’ problems with its copyright and with Hémon’s heirs were resolved; by 1924 it had gone through three printings, a total of 7,000 copies in Canada,⁹² and went on to sell over ten million copies internationally by the 2000s. Encouraged by this successful early effort, Eayrs proceeded to further ventures in original trade publishing and, by the 1930s, his constellation of Canadian authors included Morley Callaghan, Frederick Philip Grove, Raymond Knister, Stephen Leacock, and his stars E.J. Pratt and Mazo de la Roche.

⁸⁹ [Hugh Eayrs], *A Canadian Publishing House* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1923), 19.

⁹⁰ For more on Elliott’s and Gray’s contributions, see Panofsky, *The Literary Legacy of the Macmillan Company of Canada*.

⁹¹ Sir Frederick Macmillan to Hugh Eayrs, 21 September 1921, cited in Panofsky, *The Literary Legacy of the Macmillan Company of Canada*, 80.

⁹² Bruce Whiteman, “The Publication of *Maria Chapdelaine* in English,” *Papers/Cahiers* 21 (1982): 54.

After Pratt left Ryerson over its rejection of *The Witches' Brew*, Eayrs secured the Canadian rights, purchased 520 sheets of the Selwyn & Blount edition, added a new title page, and issued it in early 1926.⁹³ (See fig. 6.) The close association with MCC lasted until Pratt's death. Eayrs usually arranged for foreign publication of Pratt's books, and would purchase sheets from the London or New York publishers. For *The Roosevelt and the Antinoe* (1930), the story of a rescue at sea, Eayrs negotiated with Harper's and the New York office of Macmillans to ensure the best deal from Macmillan's New York office. The book was simultaneously published by the Macmillan offices in London, New York, and Toronto on 28 February 1930. That evening Eayrs hosted a gala banquet at which Charles G.D. Roberts broke a bottle of champagne over an effigy of Pratt in oilskins and placed a laurel wreath on its head. Sales in Canada and the United States were good for a volume of poems.⁹⁴ This book and *The Titanic* (1935) brought Pratt to the notice of men of letters like William Rose Benét, the editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature*.

When American publisher Alfred Knopf wanted a Canadian poet on his list, Benét and Ellen Elliott visited Knopf to discuss Pratt's *Brebeuf and his Brethren* (1940), but Knopf did not publish this work. MCC then proceeded without a confirmed US publisher, and printed slightly over 1,000 copies in June 1940, another 500 copies of the revised limited edition in October 1940, and 1,000 more for a second trade edition in 1941; these were sold out by 1943.⁹⁵ The American edition that finally did eventuate, *Brebeuf and His Brethren. The North American Martyrs* (Detroit: Basilian, 1942), was based on the second Canadian edition; it was printed in Toronto in a run of 3,000 copies, and shipped to Detroit.⁹⁶ MCC next issued Pratt's 13-page *Dunkirk and Other Poems* (1941). Produced in an edition of 1,000 copies, it sold out in Canada in two weeks. Although MCC shopped the work to US publisher Bennett Cerf at Random House, the American firm rejected it because it could not expect good sales for a poet who was not well known in that country.⁹⁷ MCC did place Pratt's *Collected Poems* (314 p., 1944) in the United States. Produced by MCC in a run of 3,000 copies for the domestic market, it sold

⁹³ Djwa and Moyles, *Complete Poems*, 383.

⁹⁴ David Pitt, *E.J. Pratt: The Master Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 62, 67-68.

⁹⁵ Production Files, H - P, MCC Fonds.

⁹⁶ Pratt, *Complete Poems*. Part I, 402-03.

⁹⁷ Ellen Elliott to E.J. Pratt, 15 September 1941, file 5, box 128, MCC Fonds.

Figure 6. Title page, E.J. Pratt. *The Witches' Brew*. Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, MCMXXVI. Decorations by John Austen. Printed in England.
Courtesy of Special Collections, Dalhousie University Library.

1,000 copies in Canada in several weeks, but Alfred Knopf's smaller New York edition (269 p., 1945), issued in a run of 3,300 copies, sold only 1,000 copies in twenty months.⁹⁸ Although Pratt was published abroad, he was unhappy about his international reputation, for which he apparently blamed MCC. In 1944 he told Benét, "Our Canadian Macmillans have been good to me ... but their sales have nearly all been in Canada. Their weakness ... is in making foreign connections. Ever since the death of Hugh Eayrs ... the firm has been sluggish in establishing American and English contacts."⁹⁹

Eayrs knew that modernist poetry did not sell well, but took a chance on Canadian editions of W.E. Collin's *The White Savannahs* (1936), the first critique of Canadian modernist poetry, and *New Provinces* (1936), the first anthology of Canadian modernist poetry. The anthology featured Montreal's "McGill Group," consisting of Leo Kennedy, A.M. Klein, Frank Scott, A.J.M. Smith, and Torontonians

⁹⁸ Pitt, *The Master Years*: the 1944 edition, 326; the 1945 edition, 367.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 321.

Robert Finch and Pratt. Eayrs was so concerned about the risk that he insisted the contributors themselves subscribe \$250 (later dropped to \$200) toward the costs of production. Eayrs also demanded that Smith's politicized introduction be replaced. *New Provinces* flopped, selling less than 100 copies, including those given to the contributors. Pratt's royalties were \$5.58.¹⁰⁰

Figure 7. Title Page, Mazo de la Roche. *Jalna*. Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1927. TPV. Published October, MCMXXVII. Printed in the US.

¹⁰⁰ The plan was to print 750 copies and supply the contributors with 250 copies. Hugh Eayrs to Frank Scott, 16 January 1936. Scott told Eayrs that only 82 copies were sold by 31 March 1937. File 4, box 132, MCC Fonds. Pratt's royalty, Pitt, *The Master Years*, 221.

Eayrs' other star, Mazo de la Roche (1879-1961), unlike Pratt, occasionally complained about her Canadian reception. However, she always had foreign publication and had signed contracts with Eayrs well before she catapulted to fame with *Jalna* (1927) at 48. (See fig. 7.) As he reminded her in 1936 during arrangements to publish the dramatic version of the second title in the Jalna series *Whiteoaks of Jalna* (1929), known as *Whiteoaks. A Play* (1936), "I have told Daniel Macmillan I want to buy his edition although you and I will contract as always direct so that you will get full royalty."¹⁰¹ Her first book, the collection of stories *Explorers of the Dawn* (1922), sold almost 8,000 copies in Alfred Knopf's New York edition, but the smaller sales of 750 in MCC's Canadian edition was roughly proportionate, considering the relative population of the two countries at that time.¹⁰² Eayrs had then persuaded her to leave Knopf (who had sought her out) for the New York office of Macmillan at royalties of 15% on retail for *Possession* (1923) and *Delight* (1926).¹⁰³ Macmillan's London edition of *Delight* sold 660 copies at the same royalty, numbers that made the UK office rue those high royalties, to its later regret.¹⁰⁴ When Eayrs "expressed great hopes" for her third book-length work of fiction, *Jalna* (1927), de la Roche, now "a shrewd negotiator," submitted the MS simultaneously to Edward Weeks, the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine in Boston and to Harold Latham, her editor at Macmillan of New York.¹⁰⁵ Latham lost out as her American publisher when he refused to give another 15%; he released her from the contract, whereas the London head office of Macmillan lost out only on *Jalna*. This story of the Whiteoak family, descendants of British officers who settled west of Toronto on their estate Jalna, named after a military outpost in India, won the *Atlantic Monthly*'s "first novel" prize of \$10,000 on 11 April 1927. Serialized in the *Atlantic*

¹⁰¹ Hugh Eayrs to Mazo de la Roche, 15 August 1936, file 5, box 11. The drama *Whiteoaks* was not published in Canada. On 4 May 1938, when she was in Toronto, Eayrs arranged to pay her Canadian royalties so that she would not have to pay the 5% non-residents tax, file 6, box 11. Both located in MS. Coll. 120, Mazo de la Roche Fonds, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

¹⁰² Hugh Eayrs to George P. Brett, 10 July 1922, file 10, box 90, MCC Fonds.

¹⁰³ George P. Brett to Hugh Eayrs, 14 July 1922, file 10, box 90, MCC Fonds.

¹⁰⁴ Daniel Macmillan to de la Roche, 7 January 1927, file 2, box 11, Mazo de la Roche Fonds.

¹⁰⁵ Mazo de la Roche, *Ringing the Changes* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1957), 185; Ruth Panofsky, "'Don't Let Me Do It!': Mazo de la Roche and Her Publishers," *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, 11 (1995): 173.

between May and October 1927, it was issued in book form in a first run of 75,000 copies by *Atlantic Monthly*/Little, Brown, and by their London representative Hodder & Stoughton, and by MCC. The first Toronto printings were 2,500 copies in November 1927, 1,000 in December, 250 in October 1928, and 5,000 in August 1929.¹⁰⁶ By the end of 1927, international sales reached over 100,000 copies and *Jalna* reached No. 5 on the Best Seller list. Although her prize was not as large as Ostenso's \$25,000, de la Roche became the toast of Toronto's literary elite.

Jalna's success prompted Weeks to confide that he and Eayrs would act as her "capable guardians," but she remained wary of this paternalism, and Ruth Panofsky demonstrates de la Roche's "successful negotiation into the male world of authorship ... despite attempts of publishers and editors to undermine her."¹⁰⁷ In 1931 Eayrs wondered if she should continue the series after the third novel, and later Weeks suggested she set *Young Renny* (1934) back in time. She stood her ground, put Weeks in his place, was pacified by a visit from the president of Little, Brown, Alfred McIntyre, and vindicated by the excellent sales and reviews of *Young Renny*.¹⁰⁸ She was, nevertheless, always fond of Eayrs, and dedicated the second *Jalna* book, *Whiteoaks of Jalna* (1929), to him. Although he would praise her as Canada's "most famous living author,"¹⁰⁹ de la Roche was always puzzled by her lukewarm Canadian reception. In 1940, as their letters crossed each other over the Atlantic, she complained to Ellen Elliott, "The Canadian end of my sales is almost insignificant," while Elliott confirmed that her books did not sell as well in Canada as in England and the United States.¹¹⁰ By the time of her death, the sixteen *Jalna* series had sold over 11 million copies in English and in translation.

De la Roche's and Eayrs' friend Morley Callaghan first came to MCC with his short-story collection *A Native Argosy* (1929), by which time he had assigned international rights to Scribner's in New

¹⁰⁶ Production Files, A - G, MCC Fonds.

¹⁰⁷ Panofsky, *The Literary Legacy of the Macmillan Company of Canada*, 88; Ruth Panofsky, "'Go My Own Way?' The Publication of Mazo de la Roche's *Jalna*," *Epilogue* 9 (No. 1, 1994), 1.

¹⁰⁸ Panofsky, "'Don't Let Me Do It!'" 177-181.

¹⁰⁹ Hugh Eayrs, "Mazo de la Roche," *Canadian Bookman* 20 (October- November 1938): 17, 21.

¹¹⁰ Mazo de la Roche to Ellen Elliott, 15 December 1940; Ellen Elliott to Mazo de la Roche, 18 December 1940, file 10, box 90, Mazo de la Roche Fonds.

York. (See fig. 8.) Although Callaghan would maintain an ongoing relationship with MCC in subsequent years, the Canadian firm had to navigate that relationship around the author's arrangements with a variety of US publishers. Callaghan first garnered praise in little magazines like Paris-based *This Quarter*, and was recommended by Scott Fitzgerald and Robert McAlmon to Scribner's editor Max Perkins. Perkins initially signed him for the novel *Strange Fugitive* (1928), which was carried in Canada not by MCC, but by Copp, Clark. Only after that did Callaghan's stories appear in *A Native Argosy* (1929), published by Scribner's and MCC. Callaghan then abandoned Scribner's for other US publishers while maintaining MCC as his Canadian publisher. For *They Shall Inherit the Earth* (1935), Callaghan was courted by Edward Weeks at *Atlantic Monthly*/Little, Brown, Doubleday, and Farrar & Rinehart, but he chose Bennett Cerf at Random House.¹¹¹ Random supplied 1,000 sewn sheets to MCC. In September and October 1935, 496 copies were bound in Toronto (and 25 in paper) for \$987.06. Random House also supplied MCC with 535 flat sheets and jackets for the short story collection *Now That April's Here* (1936); in August and November 520 copies were bound at a cost of \$358.06.¹¹² These figures suggest that Callaghan's Canadian sales were at best modest, despite the high regard in which he was held by fellow authors and reviewers.

Raymond Knister also arrived at MCC with a reputation for his short stories and poems in *This Quarter* and Chicago-based *The Midland*. In fact, Knister, a "shy, prematurely balding man with a bad stutter," introduced himself to Callaghan at the latter's little shop, the Viking Lending Library on Richmond Street West.¹¹³ No doubt inspired by the cachet of publishing a little magazine, Callaghan, De la Roche, and Knister once planned one for Toronto until Eayrs discouraged them. "Not one of you knows the first thing about publishing a magazine. You have no capital. You are bound to fail.' And so we gave up the idea," de la Roche remembered.¹¹⁴

Knister, however, made a promising start when Eayrs contracted him to edit the anthology *Canadian Short Stories* (1928); 2,000 copies were printed in August 1928, and 1,000 bound immediately. 850 more were bound in September for Graphic's Carillon Book Club. After

¹¹¹ Hugh Eayrs to Mazo de la Roche, 26 January 1935, file 4, box 11, Mazo de la Roche Fonds. Eayrs was discussing Callaghan in his letter to de la Roche.

¹¹² Production Files, A - G, MCC Fonds.

¹¹³ Morley Callaghan, *That Summer in Paris* (New York: Dell, 1964), 52.

¹¹⁴ De la Roche, *Ringing the Changes*, 185.

Figure 8. Title page, Morley Callaghan. *A Native Argosy*. Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, MCMXXIX. Callaghan's first book issued by Macmillan. Printed in the US. Courtesy of Special Collections, Dalhousie University Library.

a second printing in 1929, 250 copies were bound in April 1930 and 700 bound between May 1930 and September 1936.¹¹⁵ For Knister's novel *White Narcissus* (1929), for which MCC held world rights, the firm granted an exclusive licence to Harcourt, Brace of New York for the American edition at an advance of \$250 and a 10% royalty on the first 5,000 copies sold, plus an additional 5% on copies sold

¹¹⁵ Production Files, H - P, information on printing and binding for *Canadian Short Stories*, MCC Fonds.

above 5,000. In turn, MCC's contract with Jonathan Cape stipulated a royalty of 10% for the English edition, gave Cape exclusive rights in the British Empire (excluding Canada), and charged Cape's Colonial editions a royalty of 10% "on the actual price." Cape supplied MCC with 1,000 sheets of the novel in exchange for MCC's 1,000 sheets of Frederick Philip Grove's *Our Daily Bread*.¹¹⁶ Of the 1,000 sheets of *White Narcissus*, 250 were bound in March 1929, 250 in June, and 489 in November 1933.¹¹⁷

Knister probably met Frederick Philip Grove for the first time at one of Eayrs' afternoon teas on 18 February 1929.¹¹⁸ Certainly Grove advocated on behalf of Knister's work. While Grove acted as a reader for Graphic Press, he coerced his fellow judges into awarding Knister's MS of *My Star Predominant* the Graphic Prize for the best first novel of 1930. Because of Graphic's bankruptcy, Knister collected only a portion of the prize before his tragic death by drowning in 1932, and his novel about poet John Keats was issued not by Graphic nor MCC, but by Ryerson in 1934.

Between the late 1920s and the early 1940s, Frederick Philip Grove moved from Canadian publishers Ryerson to MCC and Graphic Publishers at the same time, and then on to Dent, back to Ryerson briefly, and ended with MCC. He departed Ryerson in 1927, tempted by Hugh Eayrs' promise to "build you up," and hints that he could earn up to \$10,000 a year.¹¹⁹ Grove wrote his wife Catherine that Eayrs said, referring to *Settlers of the Marsh* and *A Search for America*, "You have written the two biggest books that have come out of America."¹²⁰ Grove soon suspected Eayrs was not always "reliable,"¹²¹ even though in the space of three years MCC published five books by Grove. Eayrs arranged for *Our Daily Bread* (1927) and *The Yoke of Life* (1930) also to be issued in New York and London. In addition, he reissued *Over Prairie Trails* and *The Turn of the Year* after Grove

¹¹⁶ Macmillan of Canada contract with Jonathan Cape, 23 October 1928; with Harcourt, Brace, 8 March 1929, Contracts, box 148 (K – W), MCC Fonds.

¹¹⁷ Information on printing and binding for *White Narcissus*, Production Files, H – P, MCC Fonds.

¹¹⁸ Knister is listed as a guest at this reception, Grove, *Letters*, 245.

¹¹⁹ Hugh Eayrs to Frederick Philip Grove, 19 January 1926, 34, note 3; Frederick Philip Grove to Catherine Grove, 24 March 1928, 121. Both in *The Letters of Frederick Philip Grove*.

¹²⁰ Frederick Philip Grove to Catherine Grove, 26 March 1928, Ibid, 124.

¹²¹ Frederick Philip Grove to Catherine Grove, 30 September 1928, Ibid, 158.

pried the sheets from M&S.¹²² Eayrs invited Grove to one of his stag parties, arranged for Grove to sign books in Eaton's and make several cross-country tours. He also published the author's talks in *It Needs to Be Said* (1929), in both Toronto and New York editions, and even though Grove concluded the book fell "flat," from the print run of 1,000 copies 672 were bound by 1934.¹²³

In tandem with his publishing activities with MCC during the late 1920s and early 1930s, Grove did editing for Graphic, which also published his most popular book, a fictionalized memoir of his earlier immigrant experiences, *A Search for America* (1927). J.M. Dent published his novel *Fruits of the Earth* (1933), which had "fallen flat."¹²⁴ He was lured back to Ryerson in 1938 by Lorne Pierce's plans for a complete works. *Two Generations* (1939) was issued in an Author's Limited Edition of 500 copies that Grove raised by subscription, and Ryerson's trade edition was 1,000 copies.¹²⁵ As "mere agents for British and United States publishers, they were under the necessity of securing publication abroad. In this they failed," Grove concluded.¹²⁶ The collected works was torpedoed because no co-publisher was found, and relations soured with Pierce. "I came to the Ryerson Press because I thought the house had confidence in me. I feel a bit deserted," he wrote Pierce on 2 February 1940.¹²⁷ An exasperated Pierce told him, "A mistake for an author to have his books distributed among too many Houses. That's why we went to a good deal of expense in bringing your books under our imprint."¹²⁸ When Pierce's Board of Publication rejected the lengthy novel *The Master of the Mill*, Grove returned to Macmillan in the wake of Eayrs' death in 1940, and signed a contract with Ellen Elliott, who greatly encouraged Grove in his final years. *The Master of the Mill* (1944) had a limited edition of 200 copies, followed by the trade edition and a reprinting in 1945.

¹²² M&S to Frederick Philip Grove, 8 November 1928, 206, note 4; Frederick Philip Grove to M&S, 19 November 1928, 209-10. Both in *The Letters of Frederick Philip Grove*.

¹²³ Grove, *In Search of Myself*, 398; Production Files, A-G, MCC Fonds.

¹²⁴ Grove, *In Search of Myself*, 435.

¹²⁵ Frederick Philip Grove to W.J. Alexander, 1 December 1938, *The Letters of Frederick Philip Grove*, 339. Here Grove says the limited edition was 400 copies. A decade later he said the limited edition of *Two Generations* was 500 copies.

¹²⁶ Grove, *In Search of Myself*, 441.

¹²⁷ Frederick Philip Grove to Lorne Pierce, 2 February 1940, *The Letters of Frederick Philip Grove*, 380.

¹²⁸ Lorne Pierce to Frederick Philip Grove, 12 March 1941, *The Letters of Frederick Philip Grove*, 402, note 5.

Its 393 pages was such a major wartime production (there were restrictions on paper) that Elliott persuaded him to take only 5% royalty on 1,000 copies sold at \$3.25, which kept the price competitive with that of shorter novels; otherwise booksellers might have been reluctant to take it.¹²⁹ Macmillan's representative in London, Lovat Dickson, took a copy to England in the spring of 1946 but could not place it.

Stephen Leacock shared Grove's propensity for multiple relationships with Canadian publishers. When he became a MCC author in 1926, his previous books of humour had been published in Canadian editions by five Canadian houses. He sent his manuscripts to his London or New York publishers, with whom he reserved for himself the "exclusive right of publication in Canada,"¹³⁰ and then arranged by letter or contract for his Canadian publishers (whom he called "agents") to import sheets.¹³¹ In this hands-on manner, he self-published the first Canadian edition of *Literary Lapses* (1910), and paid the Montreal *Gazette* \$461.16 to print 3,000 copies, which sold out in six months.¹³² He then gave the world rights to John Lane, who was visiting Montreal at this time, and who remained his English publisher until his death. The next Canadian editions of *Literary Lapses* were *issues* from Lane's sheets, with the imprints of the Montreal News Company, The Publishers' Press, C.J. Musson, and S.B. Gundy. The Canadian agency for *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912) went to William "Billy" Bell, a Musson employee who established Bell & Cockburn and imported over 4,500 sheets from Lane. Three months after publication, Bell paid Leacock an advance of \$750 on a 15% royalty.¹³³ When Bell & Cockburn failed

¹²⁹ Frederick Philip Grove to Ellen Elliott, 17 March 1944, *The Letters of Frederick Philip Grove*, 446 and note 1. See also Ellen Elliott to Frederick Philip Grove, 11 October 1944, file 10, box 103, MCC Fonds.

¹³⁰ Carl Spadoni, *A Bibliography of Stephen Leacock* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1998), 103. I am gratefully indebted to his researches on Leacock's publication history.

¹³¹ Leacock to John Lane, 8 January 1912, Leacock "handed over the agency for *Literary Lapses* to the Musson Company," *The Letters of Stephen Leacock*, ed. David Staines with Barbara Nimmo (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2006), 70.

¹³² Spadoni, *A Bibliography of Stephen Leacock*, 90.

¹³³ Spadoni, *A Bibliography of Stephen Leacock*, 117. Some Canadian editions of *Literary Lapses* and *Nonsense Novels* carried the imprint of The Publishers' Press of Montreal, which went bankrupt. These copies were sold by Musson before Leacock transferred the agency to Bell & Cockburn. See Carl Spadoni, "The Publishers' Press of Montreal," *Papers/Cahiers*, 24 (1985): 38-50.

a few months into the war, Bell joined S.B. Gundy at the Toronto branch of Oxford University Press, and encouraged Leacock to join them. Gundy inherited Musson's contract for the "Canadian sale of the books contracted for with Mr. Lane in 1914," and gave Leacock a 20% royalty on *Arcadian Adventures* (1914).¹³⁴ In 1920 Leacock renegotiated Gundy's contract for the Canadian rights to Lane's ten books of humour for four more years. During the First World War, the title pages of Leacock's editions in London, New York, and Toronto frequently included all three publishers. (See fig. 9.)

In the 1920s, Leacock's shift to his new American publisher initiated a competition in which MCC and M&S vied for his Canadian rights. When John Lane's New York branch was purchased by Dodd, Mead in 1922, Leacock was included with Max Beerbohm, Rupert Brooke, G.K. Chesterton, Agatha Christie, and Anatole France in "the largest transfer of an important publishing list that the trade had seen in many years."¹³⁵ At a meeting about *My Discovery of England* (1922) with Frank Dodd and Leacock, Gundy argued this was not a book of humour and worried about paying an advance on 4,000 copies in the depressed state of the Canadian market; but he sold them all by the end of the year and ordered 1,000 more sheets from Dodd. Leacock now wanted a "scheme whereby I could deal with one house instead of with three," and rejected contracts demanding "three future books."¹³⁶ When Leacock and Gundy disagreed on renewed terms, the author signed a letter contract with his friend Hugh Eayrs at MCC for the Canadian rights for *Winnowed Wisdom* (1926), *Short Circuits* (1928), and *The Iron Man & The Tin Woman* (1929).¹³⁷ In 1929 Leacock told Eayrs, "I propose to get entire control in Canada of all my books past & present (i.e. take them away from the Oxford Press [Toronto] to whom my lawyers are writing) so that if ever the time comes we can get out a complete edition," and added, "I wanted the copyright of all my books to remain with your house & me."¹³⁸ However, when

¹³⁴ Stephen Leacock to Basil Willett, 28 January 1919, *The Letters of Stephen Leacock*, 120.

¹³⁵ John Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing in the United States. Vol. 3. The Golden Age between Two Wars 1920-1940* (New York: Bowker, 1978), 3, 91.

¹³⁶ Stephen Leacock to Basil Willett, 8 March 1922, 145; Stephen Leacock to Frank Dodd, 24 January 1923, 154. Both in *The Letters of Stephen Leacock*.

¹³⁷ On 6 February 1926, Leacock sent essentially the same letter to Hugh Eayrs, Basil Willett of John Lane, London, and Frank Dodd, announcing this new contract, box 148, contracts, K - W, MCC Fonds.

¹³⁸ Stephen Leacock to Hugh Eayrs, 5 December 1929, *The Letters of Stephen Leacock*, 203.

Figure 9. Title page, Stephen Leacock. *Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy*. New York: John Lane Company; London: John Lane, The Bodley Head; Toronto: S.B. Gundy, MCMXV. Printed in the United States.

Dodd suggested that M&S handle his books in Canada, Leacock gave the Canadian rights for thirteen books to Dodd, Mead (Canada) Ltd, a subsidiary managed by M&S.¹³⁹ He also permitted M&S to publish a Canadian edition of *Sunshine Sketches* (1931): 2,500 copies were printed from Dodd, Mead's plates in April 1931 at a 10% royalty; 2,000 were bound by May 1933.¹⁴⁰ Frank Dodd urged Leacock to let M&S handle *Afternoons in Utopia* (1932), using the American plates or sheets, for which McClelland offered a competitive 20% royalty and a \$300 advance. However, Leacock stuck with Eayrs for this book,

¹³⁹ Spadoni, *A Bibliography of Stephen Leacock*, 231, 244. In a letter to Allan Lane on 23 January 1931, John McClelland claimed that his was the first firm to ask for Leacock's Canadian rights after they were relinquished by S.B. Gundy. McClelland hoped to take Leacock's books through Dodd, Mead, file 6, box 122, Parker Papers, M&S Fonds.

¹⁴⁰ Information from Authors, K - Z, file 6, box 122, Parker Papers, M&S Fonds.

but told him, "Your firm had rather hard luck with my other funny books," and the humorist's comment proved prophetic: the MCC edition sold an embarrassing 514 copies in Canada.¹⁴¹ The book was savaged by William Arthur Deacon in an anonymous review in a London, Ontario, newspaper.¹⁴²

Relations between Leacock and Eayrs had begun to cool even before the firm's lack of success with *Afternoons in Utopia*. Leacock had earlier signed a contract for his non-fiction work *Economic Prosperity in the British Empire* (1930). Rejected by Dodd, Mead and the London office of Macmillan, Eayrs arranged for its publication by Constable in London, whose edition sold well.¹⁴³ Leacock urged Eayrs, "Do Rush the book & boom it,"¹⁴⁴ but delays obtaining Constable's sheets for the Canadian edition turned into months. Macmillan took 2,080 sheets, almost all of which were bound in Toronto by early 1934.¹⁴⁵ Carl Spadoni notes that Leacock's criticism of MCC's poor promotion was "a turning point in the losing battle by the Macmillan Company to represent Leacock in Canada."¹⁴⁶

One of Eayrs' last ventures before his death in April 1940 was journalist Irene Baird's second novel, *Waste Heritage* (1939), which was based on a strike and protest march by unemployed workers in Victoria, BC. (See fig. 10) Its subject posed risks for sales – and then suffered an unexpected setback. When Farrar, Straus declined it, Baird's New York agent Marion Saunders sent it to Random House, where Bennett Cerf decided it was worth publishing although its "chances of sale in the United States are dubious," but he wanted

¹⁴¹ Stephen Leacock to Hugh Eayrs, 20 January 1932, Spadoni, *A Bibliography of Stephen Leacock*, 262. Both the quote and the number of copies sold are from this page.

¹⁴² Leacock letters to: H.A. Gwynne, 2 December 1932, 226; the *London Advertiser*, 2 January 1933, 227; and Vernon Knowles, 6 February 1933, 228. All in *The Letters of Stephen Leacock*.

¹⁴³ Stephen Leacock to Hugh Eayrs, 14 March 1930, *The Letters of Stephen Leacock*, 207.

¹⁴⁴ Stephen Leacock to Hugh Eayrs, 14 April 1930, *The Letters of Stephen Leacock*, 208.

¹⁴⁵ Spadoni, *Bibliography of Stephen Leacock*, 240. Spadoni says half the edition was sold. The Macmillan of Canada Production Files H – P, MCC Fonds, indicates that 2,080 sheets were received from Constable, and that 2071 copies were bound in Toronto. Macmillan paid \$676.95 for importing and binding. On 4 June 2015, Carl Spadoni cautioned me about frequent discrepancies between copies printed and copies bound in the Production Files.

¹⁴⁶ Spadoni, "Stephen Leacock and the Macmillan Company of Canada," *Papers/Cahiers* 22 (1983): 63.

Figure 10. Title page, Irene Baird. *Waste Heritage*. Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1939. Printed in Canada.

to option her next books.¹⁴⁷ Saunders drew up the American and Canadian contracts, telling Baird and Eayrs she could clean those up better than they could; in each case she asked for a 10% royalty

¹⁴⁷ Bennett Cerf to Hugh Eayrs, 30 June 1939, file 4, box 71, MCC Fonds.

on the list price for the first 5,000 copies sold and 15% thereafter. Saunders persuaded Baird to drop the title "Sit down, Brother! Sit down!" for fear of libel because sit-down strikes were illegal in Canada and only recently legal in the United States.¹⁴⁸ For *Waste Heritage*, Cerf suggested reversing the way the two firms handled Callaghan's books: instead, he would take 1,000 sewn sheets of the Canadian printing (2,000 copies) and do the binding and dust jackets in New York.¹⁴⁹ In Toronto, Eayrs' brother Carl Eayrs, the sometime labour editor of the Toronto *Evening Telegram*, edited the book.

Canada's declaration of war on 10 September 1939 brought unforeseen problems for book publishing almost immediately, and in relation to the publication of *Waste Heritage* they were particularly acute. Backups on orders for paper slowed printing to the end of September. Then Eayrs held up publication until November because new Department of National Defence regulations forbade circulation of books that might prejudice recruiting, and these had to be considered in relation to the novel. Page 6 of the page proofs carried a suggestion that Hitler would give the unemployed boys a job; page 166 stated "we could use a bunch of Nazis around here," and on page 261 the protagonist Matt said, "I don't belong around here unless they have a war and shove a gun in my hand." After privately conferring with O.D. Skelton, the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, Eayrs deleted the first two comments and modified the third. Eayrs told Cerf "a private tip from the highest possible circles [indicated] that it was either that or the book wouldn't come out."¹⁵⁰ Although sales of *Waste Heritage* were affected by the outbreak of war, it was not remaindered until the spring of 1942. As Eayrs was about to hold back publication in October 1939, Baird wrote to him, "By God I'd love to feel I had some part in building up a literary tradition in Canada that was equal parts sound technique, vision and guts."¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Marion Saunders to Hugh Eayrs, 2 June 1939, file 4, box 71, MCC Fonds.

¹⁴⁹ Bennett Cerf to Hugh Eayrs, 30 June 1939, file 4, box 71, MCC Fonds.

¹⁵⁰ Hugh Eayrs to Bennett Cerf, 21 November 1939, file 4, box 71, MCC Fonds.

¹⁵¹ Irene Baird to Hugh Eayrs, 28 October 1939, file 4, box 71, MCC Fonds. For a detailed publishing history set in the context of contemporary social and political challenges, see Jody Mason, "'Sitdown, Brother, Sitdown!': The Problem of Commitment and the Publishing History of Irene Baird's *Waste Heritage*," *Papers/Cahiers* 45, no. 2 (2007), 143–61.

V. Promoting “the doctrine and virtues of a separate Canadian market.”¹⁵²

Publishing Canadian editions of trade book titles offered significant challenges throughout the interwar period, especially in the Great Depression of the 1930s. William Arthur Deacon told nature writer Francis Dickie in 1931, “The publishing situation here is awful. We are absolutely without a single house in Canada that is entirely satisfactory to the native author.”¹⁵³ Modernist poetry had dismal sales. Fiction sales had to reach 2,000 copies to make a profit, which meant that established authors with diminished sales were less risky than newcomers. Callaghan had Eayrs and MCC in mind when he stated, “Hasn’t the most ambitious of the Canadian publishers pointed out that his profits on Canadian books amount to one per cent.?”¹⁵⁴ For that reason textbooks, agency books, and international best-sellers were still bread and butter, and by the early 1930s M&S duly reassigned editor Donald French to agency books.¹⁵⁵ Canadian publishers received few public acknowledgements for their efforts in relation to Canadian authors and their books. At a 1935 literary gathering in Toronto, after hearing his American friend Edward Weeks praised for having done more for Canadian literature “than any living soul,” Eayrs wrote bitterly to Mazo de la Roche, “In fifteen years we have put something like \$300,000 into Canadian literature excluding textbooks. I often feel it is a perfectly thankless job.”¹⁵⁶ Trade insiders, however, acclaimed those achievements. In 1946, Ellen Elliott paid tribute to the financial sacrifices of Eayrs, Donald French, and Lorne Pierce: “In those early days it was unusual for any Canadian book to be a commercial success ... but it didn’t matter They were discovering new talent and fostering it, helping it to grow.”¹⁵⁷ Elliott modestly omitted herself and her own contributions.

¹⁵² Lovat Dickson, “Report on Mr Eayrs’ London Visit January 13 - February 16, 1938” (typescript), 1, file 1, box 14, MCC Fonds.

¹⁵³ William Arthur Deacon to Francis Dickie, 12 July 1931, *Dear Bill*, 128.

¹⁵⁴ Morley Callaghan, “The Plight of Canadian Fiction,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 7 (January 1938): 157.

¹⁵⁵ Information provided to me by staff at McClelland & Stewart in 1966-67.

¹⁵⁶ Hugh Eayrs to Mazo de la Roche, 30 April 1935, file 4, box 11, Mazo de la Roche Fonds. In his pamphlet, *The Barometer Points to Change* (Toronto Macmillan, 1938), Eayrs said “an investment of nearly half a million dollars has gone into Canadian books alone” (p. 12).

¹⁵⁷ Ellen Elliott, “Publishing,” *Canadian Bookseller* 62 (March 1946): 49-50.

In London in January 1938, Eayrs worked to promote a separate Canadian market for foreign authors as well when he enlisted Lovat Dickson to help persuade the British authors attached to UK literary agent J.B. Pinker to sign up for Canadian editions. Dickson cautioned that Pinker's tactic in even contemplating separating out the Canadian market might be to secure better advances from the UK-based firms, "the sole purpose of which is to irritate the English publisher without benefitting ourselves."¹⁵⁸ However, Pinker and his British authors proved receptive to the idea of separate Canadian editions, and Eayrs returned with contracts in hand for Rosamond Lehmann, E. Phillips Oppenheim, Hugh Walpole, and Frances Brett Young. Eayrs regaled the Canadian Authors' Association with stories about those British stars, and then announced the grim news he was cutting back on his firm's commitment to Canadian authors. Referring to the general "glut" of books in the market, he mused about reducing Canadian authors' 10% royalty and asking them to contribute to production costs.¹⁵⁹ In spite of his pessimistic forecast, Canadian authors continued to knock on publishers' doors, and Eayrs boasted a year later that he received over 2,200 manuscripts annually, an average of 40 a week, and he suspected the same numbers came to Lorne Pierce.¹⁶⁰

VI. Conclusion

In the interwar period, these were among the significant achievements that occurred in Canada's English-language book publishing industry: publishers supported authors by advertisements, sent free copies to reviewers, arranged signing sessions and promotional tours, and participated in book weeks. McClelland helped Carman extend his Canadian audience, and Carman's new American publisher revived his reputation in the United States.¹⁶¹ Lorne Pierce took risks shaping the careers of Laura Salverson and Frederick Philip Grove and

¹⁵⁸ Dickson, "Report," 4.

¹⁵⁹ Eayrs, *The Barometer Points to Change*, "glut," 11; 24-25.

¹⁶⁰ Hugh Eayrs, *It Isn't Good Enough* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1939), 6.

¹⁶¹ R.H. Hathaway, "Who's Who in Canadian Literature. Bliss Carman," *Canadian Bookman* 8 (October 1926): 300. Hathaway says this revival occurred after a thirty-five-year career in which "none of his books ever had a Canadian publication, and ... little or no real effort had ever been made to bring his books to the attention of Canadian readers."

arranging for their publication abroad,¹⁶² as did Eyrs for Knister and Pratt. All three Toronto firms highlighted in this article – McClelland & Stewart, Ryerson, and Macmillan Company of Canada – played instrumental roles in introducing writers and their works that brought vital new themes into Canadian literature: Grove and Salverson's books grappled with the post-war west; Callaghan and Baird's novels nailed down the anxieties and dislocations of Depression-era urban Canada.

In the interwar period, McClelland & Stewart, Ryerson, and Macmillan Company of Canada firmly established themselves as publishers of Canadian literature, through their activities quashing any lingering notions that they were mere distributors of foreign books in Canada. They negotiated with foreign publishers as equals rather than subordinates, and their co-publishing achievements indicated the respect and confidence international publishers held for them. Changes in copyright law meant they now had the power to prohibit foreign editions and to control which foreign editions could enter. Even though American and British book publishers maintained their monopolies on world rights, the separate contracts clarified who owned the Canadian rights, and those contracts ensured that Canadian profits went directly to our publishers and their authors. Nor should we underestimate their influence after World War Two on publishers and authors who strove for more autonomy in Canada's book market.

In 1947 William Arthur Deacon wrote to Catherine Grove, the wife who shared Grove's dreams and hardships, about their mutual pioneering in Canadian literature: "For 25 years our craft has struggled for status, recognition, minimum returns permitting a writer to go on with his work. Progress has been clearly made between 1921 and 1946. But I fear it will take a second quarter-century to finish the job. None of us who worked through the first 25-year period will last to the end of the second."¹⁶³ Deacon lasted out the 25 years, not dying until 1977, but his prediction proved correct for the three men who took centre stage in pioneering separate contracts for Canadian authors: McClelland, Pierce, and Eyrs.

¹⁶² Campbell, *Both Hands*, 353. Campbell credits Pierce "for recognizing and largely supporting [Salverson's] work. But his own values both influenced some Salverson manuscripts and left others unpublished in a way that shows how greatly a publisher can shape an author's oeuvre."

¹⁶³ William Arthur Deacon to Catherine Grove, 6 August 1947, *Dear Bill*, 260.

RÉSUMÉ

Entre 1920 et 1940, trois maisons d'édition torontoises – McClelland & Stewart, Ryerson Press et Macmillan of Canada – négocièrent fermement avec les auteurs canadiens des contrats distincts pour le marché national. Plusieurs des auteurs du pays réussissaient à l'époque à faire publier leurs œuvres chez des éditeurs étrangers, lesquels conservaient habituellement les droits mondiaux des titres édités, contrôlant par la même occasion le marché canadien. Cependant, les contrats distincts des décennies 1920 et 1930 furent plus lucratifs pour les éditeurs nationaux, puisqu'ils n'avaient désormais plus à payer de redevances aux maisons d'édition étrangères. Ils l'étaient d'autant plus pour les écrivains, qui recevaient davantage de redevances grâce à cette entente. De plus, les agents de liaison des maisons d'édition canadiennes ainsi que leurs homologues des autres pays s'assuraient que les auteurs d'ici avaient toujours accès aux marchés internationaux. Cette augmentation des contrats éditoriaux distincts fut une étape cruciale dans la transformation du commerce du livre au Canada : d'abord colonial, il devint de plus en plus autonome. Au début de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, un nouveau sentiment d'appartenance commença à régner parmi la communauté d'auteurs du pays. Qui plus est, la littérature canadienne était désormais le sujet de débats animés et de critiques vives. Cela dit, les maisons d'édition nationales durent continuer de représenter des entreprises de l'extérieur, puisqu'elles ne pouvaient pas assurer leur survie grâce au bassin d'auteurs locaux, encore trop restreint à cette époque.